



Ideology Portrayal of Women's Oppression in Joshi's Selected Novels

Ashwaq Naji Jumaa, Prof. Sarab Kadir Mugair

College of Arts, Iraqia University, Iraq

ashwaq.n.jumaah@aliraqia.edu.iq

Sarab.k.mugair@alraqiq.edu.iq

Received: 09 Apr 2026; Received in revised form: 05 May 2026; Accepted: 08 May 2026; Available online: 12 May 2026

©2026 The Author(s). Published by Infogain Publication. This is an open-access article under the CC BY license

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Abstract— One of the multifaceted topics in the literary tradition is women's oppression as it is associated with social female issues such as marginalization, self-determination, inequality, rights ...etc. The novelist, Alka Joshi, dealt with the issue of women's oppression in her novels, particularly *The Henna Artist* (2020) and *The Secret Keeper of Jaipur* (2021). Hence, the main job of this paper is, through the application of Jeffries' toolkit, to investigate the linguistic and stylistic constructions of women's oppression in these novels. Based on qualitative and quantitative research procedure, thirty extract are drawn from these two novels and analyzed in terms of Jeffries (2010) conceptual-textual functions. The study concludes that in the two novels, women struggle to stand against negative aspects in a society, such as gender inequality, patriarchy, women discrimination, marginalization. The writer, through her female characters, tries to depict women as feeble creatures who undergo male control and power.



Keywords— Alka Joshi, Gender Studies, Stylistics, Literary Criticism, *The Henna Artist*.

I. INTRODUCTION

The issue of women's oppression is tenacious, multilayered, worldwide entrenched in past, economic, and communal constructions that restrict women's self-determination and fairness. For centuries, the employment of women has been diminished and subjugated through slighter or no salaries; dangerous and unfettered working circumstances; the nonattendance for all-embracing and appreciated national work; and being involuntary to offer all salaries to male partner. In other words, women are less salaried than men but go in for the majority of the domestic exertion at home; they are frequently entombed into economic dependency on men. Further, they are enforced to depend on a sexist scheme for economic assistance. This help is quite under-subsidized and does minute to help women in economic requirement. In certain cases, women are enforced to go in into sex labor — an additional-legal scheme of sexual and commercial corruption (Nabila, 2020).

Through history, women were found to struggle for their rights since they were the “sufferers of “social and

economic discrimination. Upper and middle-class women's choice were limited to marriage and motherhood, or spinsterhood” (Cruea, 2005, p. 187). Women were forced to depend on their spouses in their living. Their rights were restricted and this “brought about domestic dependance. In this respect, Smith-Rosenberg (cited in Cruea 2005, p. 187) expounds that women were disheartened to make money by themselves; therefore, marriage was an essential strategy to continue in life. This, in return, leads women to increase consciousness so as to arise from male-controlled society. Nevertheless, numerous feminist movements concerning the issue of women's struggle, “women from around the world still experience challenges and oppression even in the present day” (Nabila, 2020, p.2).

The theme of women's oppression is grounded in the historical standing of women as private belongings, and their unequal connection to men in the establishment of a family. Legislation keeping the standing of women as assets still exists nowadays. These legislations restrict women freedom by engaging limitations on their sexualities and

their bodies. although some multiplicative rights, like abortion and birth control, are lawful for most women in the US, the right to abortion and birth control are still legally and extra-legally restricted to women in general and frequently these rights are out of the economic reach of working and poor women. These rights, which were struggled by generations of women and associates, are now under outbreak (Walby, 1990).

The issue of women's oppression is not a newly-born; it arose in centuries with various forms and took different shapes. Going back to the history of Roman and Greek, women were observed to be recognized as male's belongings. Hence, women were found to obey their husband's orders and almost had no independence to perform their own wishes. Women's oppression has become one of the somber problems that extended even to the current days. Various topics in societies are every so often conferred and represented in literary works, dramas, novels and poems. One important topic in societies that is depicted via works of literature is women's oppression. Alka Joshi is one of the novelists who tackles the topic of women's oppression in her novels, particularly *The Henna Artist* (2020) and *The Secret Keeper of Jaipur* (2021). The current paper intends through the application of Jeffries' toolkit to investigate the linguistic and stylistic constructions of women's oppression in these novels.

These two novels reflect and replicate gendered power relations within a social framework shaped by patriarchal principles and cultural prospects. The emphasis, here, is on how language itself becomes the mechanism that encodes and maintains these power relations rather than just the thematic presence of oppression (Fairclough, 1995). Utilizing Jeffries' (2010) critical stylistics, as the methodological foundation, the present paper inspects the language patterns that frame, transport, and ideologically underpin gender inequality. Essentially, critical stylistics attempts to provide a description of the writers' ideologies through their linguistic choices in regard to their ideational perspectives, thoughts and implications. Through the use of Jeffries' (2010) ten textual-conceptual functions, the paper attempt to disclose what the text is doing. Jeffries' choices, although subtle, carry significant ideological heaviness and help naturalize hierarchical gender relations (Lazar, 2014).

Essentially, this paper tries to detect how ideological assumptions are entrenched in the novels through various elements, such as presupposition, implication, assumption and the organization of textual information (Fairclough, 1995; Jeffries, 2010). These elements work together to either foreground or background certain ideas, thereby influencing how readers engage with the underlying social meanings (van Dijk, 1998). They have become the

theoretical apparatus for the investigation of ideology. They imply the idea that all texts (including novels) are ideologically loaded, whether covertly or overtly. Hence, the main concern of this paper is to unveil these ideologies by means of Jeffries' textual-conceptual functions.

II. WOMEN'S OPPRESSION

One of the challenges that has persisted for generations without a workable remedy is women's oppression. Women have even been seen as men's belongings throughout history; they hardly have self-determination to track their own welfares, and therefore, are required to follow their husbands' directions. The theme of women's oppression has entered many fields of life, politics, social affairs, media and literature. In literature, it has occupied a lot of spaces, particularly those works which are concerned with women's agonies and struggles.

Women's astuteness seeks to improve women's identities in society, address their problems, and alter long-standing attitudes surrounding them. Feminism has been arisen to clash with marginalization and oppression that women experience in all fields of life. As well, it attempts to empower women by granting them the same opportunities and rights as males in society. In general, feminists believe that women are subjected to discrimination and oppression, and that society is structured to favor males over women. Mills (1995, p. 2) affirms that feminists consider society as patriarchal in which men's share of benefits is not equal to women's: "there is a general difference in the way that men and women are treated in society as a whole and in the way that they view themselves and others view them as gendered beings". Therefore, feminists through history are observed to speak out against the inequalities they have experienced due to their gender. They believe that patriarchy permeates most civilizations. And women's jobs have been restricted to being exploited as sexual objects and staying at home (Mills, 1998, p. 2).

Wodak (1997, p. 42) expounds that, through European and American history, women are mistreated and that society is preoccupied with matters of economic dominance while ignoring women. This explains why some radical feminists believe that society needs to be rebuilt because it is a corrupt and irreparable system. Furthermore, researchers believe that women in most societies are fraught and that women's oppression of women is surely an act of injustice directed specifically at women in order to force them into doing something in a punishing manner. This is due to the fact that women in society have no equality, freedom, or rights. This act of unfairness may cause woman to feel depressed or under additional mental strain.

Barker (2003) offers a more detailed and all-inclusive explanation of oppression, stating that oppression is often reflected as:

“the social act of placing severe restrictions on an individual group, or institution. Typically, a government or political organization in power places restrictions formally or covertly on oppressed groups so they may be exploited and less able to compete with other social groups. The oppressed individual or group is devalued, exploited, and deprived of privileges by the individual or group who has more power (p. 307).

It is clear the whole discussion concerning the issue of oppression revolves around the key concepts ‘privilege, mistreatment, and devaluation’. In domestic domain, oppression occurs in a specific household when a husband mistreats his wife by hitting, fronting, or slapping her, which can negatively impact her physical or mental well-being. Restricting women's involvement in the workplace or other public opportunities, such as in law, education, politics, society, research, technology, and so on, is a common type of oppression in the public realm. Then, feminism, as a reaction movement, becomes an instrument to attain equality of rights between men and women when oppression is instigated by manly supremacy. Feminism prioritizes the valuation of women's and men's social stance so as to endorse knowledge for the accomplishment of a better life for women. In addition, feminism helps the development of appropriate explanations to the oppression and acumen against women in a society.

Researchers offer an awareness that oppression is universal, rooted in society on the whole. Payne (1998) maintains this perspective is radical and socialist-collectivist, as it aligns with the ethics and standards of social actions. Numerous social workers encounter strong social services that face progressive change in the course of their change ingenuities. Relationally, Robbins (2011) affirms that oppression concept is resulting from manifold disciplines and shares theoretical frameworks with “feminist theory, critical social theory, sociological conflict theory, and the empowerment method”. Oppression theory is concerned with the interconnected systems of privilege and domination, the exploitation of feeble people by the rich who become richer, and the alienation of employees.

In his survey of types of oppression, Young (1990, pp. 45–56) recognizes “five categories of oppression: cultural imperialism, marginalization, violence, exploitation, and helplessness”. He infers that women's oppression is an

intricate issue that is still worth discussing in the up-to-the-minute period. However, there was a feminist movement at the 19th century, a lot still do not completely hold “the idea that men and women should be treated equally. The feminist movement still needs to fight to convince people, particularly men, that women have equal rights”.

Coping with Young, Soest (2008) explains that oppression is preserved by “ideology and violence or the threat of violence”; it delivers authority and benefit to some while rejecting it to others who are observed as the standard and others who are conceived as diverse. van Soest (2008) adds that other characters of oppression embrace the institutionalization of oppressive directions by society and the anonymity of members of the persecuted minority. Nevertheless, a characteristic “society has in-groups and out-groups”, and what is privilege in one setting could be oppression in another” (Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008, p.6).

III. JEFFRIES' TOOLKIT

Before embarking on explaining Jeffries' toolkit, or what is known as conceptual-textual functions, it is important to give an idea about “what is meant by critical stylistics” and “what does it include? Critical stylistics is a newly-born branch developed by Lesley Jeffries who attempts to integrate stylistics and critical discourse analysis. It is an approach to the study of language where the main focus centers on ‘ideology and style’, that is, the description of ideology and power in a language. Critical stylistics is a reply to CDA by “returning the text to its central position in the analysis and to move away from politically motivated nature” (Ras, 2020, p. 197).

Due to the imprecision and the absence of the apparatuses of literary studies, Jeffries depends on stylistics which on condition that the vocabulary required to designate literary influences. Critical stylistics is used to refer to stylistic “work studying how social meanings are represented through language, this stylistic tendency is motivated by critical linguistics and CDA” (Nørgaard et al., 2010, p. 136). It can be employed to examine “literary and non-literary texts” as it offers critical stylistics with a scheme of discovering ideology in texts. (Jeffries, 2014a p. 410). Thus, it is known as “a text-based methodology (Jeffries, 2014b, p. 476).

For Jeffries and Walker (2012, p. 214), the aim of a text analysis is the uncovering and explanation of “ideology in texts”. Yet, the conceptual analysis is concerned with the manners of elucidating those ideologies and giving senses to ambiguous and regular expressions, “through the denotational and connotational meaning of words within

context". Hence, the conceptual meaning is influenced by "the world around us" (Saeed, 2016, p. 24), and thus influenced by "people's ideology". Contextual meaning and textual meaning are prone to various interpretations, basically determined by the context of situation. In terms of critical stylistics, there is a recognizable "level of meaning between the linguistic, systematic or literal meaning and the contextual meaning of words". This textual meaning is unlike the meaning of the text, and also different from the creator's and receiver's meaning and has a less obvious "form-function relationship than linguistic meaning" (Jeffries, 2015, p. 380).

Basically, Jeffries' model of critical stylistic seemed to be a response to the nebulousness owing to depend on typically on contextual traits and absence of the analytical tools of literary studies within the realm of CDA. Therefore, she established her critical stylistic model of study which consists of ten tools which extend from ones which focus on examining how texts name and describe things around people ("naming and describing") to how "they represent time, space and society" (the way texts construct concepts such as time and society) (Jeffries, 2014a, pp. 413-419). These tools are summarized in the following table:

No	Toolkit	Clarification
1	Naming & Describing	It analyzes how English texts and their makers employ a variety of linguistic means to "name and describe someone or something". That is writers/ speakers choose particular words and expressions to "name/ describe" what is around them (Jeffries, 2010, p. 17). For example, a writer/speaker uses "the referent's proper noun" (e.g. John), selects a more friendly phrase " <i>my best friend</i> or <i>my brother</i> ". This possible manner of referencing to the same object, and "each of which is employed to serve a specific goal".
2	Representing Actions/ Events/States	This tool focuses on a tool that is concerned with the English verbal elements. It investigates "how actions, states, and events are presented"; it centers on the verbal element of the sentence which is an underpinning component of the sentence. Writers/speakers may choose a verb that suits their intents, simply because a verb is the element that indicates the relationship among the elements of the sentence. Consider the following examples: <i>The building collapsed.</i> (event) <i>The driver crashed the building</i> (action) <i>The building is down</i> (state) Each sentence has a particular type influence on the listener/reader. "Events represent what is happening; actions represent what is being done; and states what is being only a state" (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). Jeffries (2022, p. 55) relies on Halliday's transitivity rooted founded in how to categorize verbs in terms of whether "they express acts, states of mind, behavior, states of being, or just verbalization processes" (Tabbert, 2015, p.48). That is, the four key classes are recognized: 1) Material Action Processes (<i>The policeman ran to the station</i>); 2) Verbalization Processes (<i>He said that he would come early</i>); 3) Mental Cognition Processes (<i>She recognized it was so precise</i>) and 4) Relational Processes (<i>She is a black women</i>).
3	Equating & Contrasting	'Equivalence and contrast' is found in a text through verbal processes and stylistic procedures. Through the linguistic choices a writer/speaker attempts to "compare and contrast" things which disclose ideologies. Text producers use various words or phrases (such as synonyms and antonyms) to identify an object (Jeffries, 2010, pp. 51-52). Equating can be achieved via 'x is like y' (e.g. <i>Men are like lions</i>) or x is y (e.g. <i>Women are ungrateful</i>). Here, the verb <i>be</i> links two equal elements in each sentence. Opposition can be produced by employing a variety of stylistic devices (e.g. <i>Men are strong: women are weak</i>).
4.	Exemplifying & Enumerating	Exemplifying focuses on one or more examples of the memberships of a particular class without having to designate them all; while Enumerating deals with listing every participant of a particular class. Examine the following (A. Exemplifying B. Enumerating): A. " <i>Mum, Dad, Uncle Sam and the twins all came to greet us</i> ".

		<i>B. "Everyone in town was present, including the mayor and his spouse, city council members, and representatives from every industry and company you can think of".</i> (Jeffries, 2022, p. 125)
5	Prioritizing	It is a syntactic practice that writers/speakers employ to highpoint the most central element of a sentence: it allows sentence elements to be organized in the anticipated sequence. Then, it allows writers/speakers to emphasize on some features while paying less consideration to others. Consider these two examples: <i>A. The police imprisoned a few protestors.</i> <i>B. A few protestors were imprisoned by the police.</i>
6	Implying and Assuming	It specifies how "texts implications and presumptions make ideologies appear to be common sense". That is, it focuses on implicatures and presuppositions (Tabbert, 2016, p. 113). It investigates aspects of meaning that are regularly assumed to be less direct than lexical items and phrases and may hence help in the regularization of specific ideologies. Consider <i>A. My friend drives a red Toyota.</i> The example assumes that "my friend and his car exist". Stubbornly, "logical presuppositions" are much more complicated, perhaps more ideologically alleged, and, as the name hints at, can be inferred (logically). Implying, is more complicated and challenging to interpret. It is mainly based on the writer's/speaker's intention and context of situation.
7	Negating	Jefferies (2022, p. 141) explains that the formation of "what is not" is one way that writers/speakers prefer to offer their readers an astounding understanding. Via negation, the reader's minds can create "an alternate interpretation of the circumstance that appears to be at odds with the original message sent by the text". Negation can emphasize "what might have been, creating a hypothetical version of the world described in the text". Jefferies (2010, p. 106) proclaims that negation is critical in "helping readers comprehend and conceptualize the world in terms of what does not occur".
8	Hypothesizing	Hypothesizing is characteristically obviously specified by the writer, who conjectures "what has occurred, is occurring, or will occur" (Jeffries, 2010, pp. 114-130). It is initiated through modality which involves the representation of the writers/speaker's awareness of "the possibility or desirability" of a certain situation. It is significant to notice that creating a hypothetical scenario encompasses not only the utilization of "modal verbs (or other linguistic elements), but also contexts and intonation". Consider: <i>Emma may have indicated she would be there next week.</i>
9	Presenting Others' Speech & Thoughts	Writers often have the capability of explicitly or implicitly quoting or transferring the words and expressions of others. Jefferies (2010, p. 131) maintains that the capability of depicting "other people's words and/or thoughts in writing has the potential to be very manipulative for both the readers and the people whose words and/or thoughts are being portrayed". Consider these two examples: <i>A. Isabella said, "I'm terribly sorry".</i> (Direct Speech) <i>B. Isabella said that she was terribly sorry.</i> (Indirect Speech)
10	Representing Time, Space & Society	It intends to categorize and observe how writers/speakers produce "text worlds, or mental images" for their readers/addressees. For instance, a writers/speakers employ deixis to build the "temporal and spatial dimensions of a text" so as to produce a text situation that will influence readers/audience. Deixis is concerned with utterances that "make reference to a person, a location, or a time" (Yule, 2010, p. 128). Consider these examples: <i>Suha will meet you tomorrow.</i> (Temporal deixis) <i>She will attain the task.</i> (Personal deixis)

IV. METHODOLOGY

The paper utilizes an amalgamation of qualitative and quantitative procedures. With the intention of providing a more exhaustive and precise inspection of the representation of women's oppression in Joshi's *The Henna Artist* and *The Secret keeper of Jaipur* in terms of critical stylistic analysis, the qualitative practice is used to provide an in-depth explanatory inspection of the novels. The critical stylistic tools allow the researcher to discover implied meanings ideologies linked to 'gender, power dynamics, representation of agency or its denial'. they critically highlight how meanings are produced via language rather than just what is said. The qualitative practice is reinforced by the quantitative procedure through the discovery of the commonness of linguistic elements (naming, negation and prioritizing), representing recurring linguistic forms rather than relying only on individual examples.

Thirty extracts are drawn from Joshi's *The Henna Artist* (2020) and *The Secret Keeper of Jaipur* (2021) to be the data of this paper. These novels are selected due to their representations of societal norms, traditions, and beliefs. Women's oppression appears to be the chief issue theme; these novels hold women's depiction and oppression (concerning women's subjugation, right, patriarchy, violence, gender discernment, and disparities). In particular, these novels offer ideological and linguistic illustration of women's oppression under male-controlled social and cultural principles. Jeffries' (2010) model of critical stylistics focusing on the text conceptual-textual functions (mentioned above) is employed as where it addresses ideology in the novels by discussing numerous modes of analysis and merging them to construct a frame of analysis (Tabbert, 2016, p. 37). Consider this proposed model drawn from Jeffries (2010).

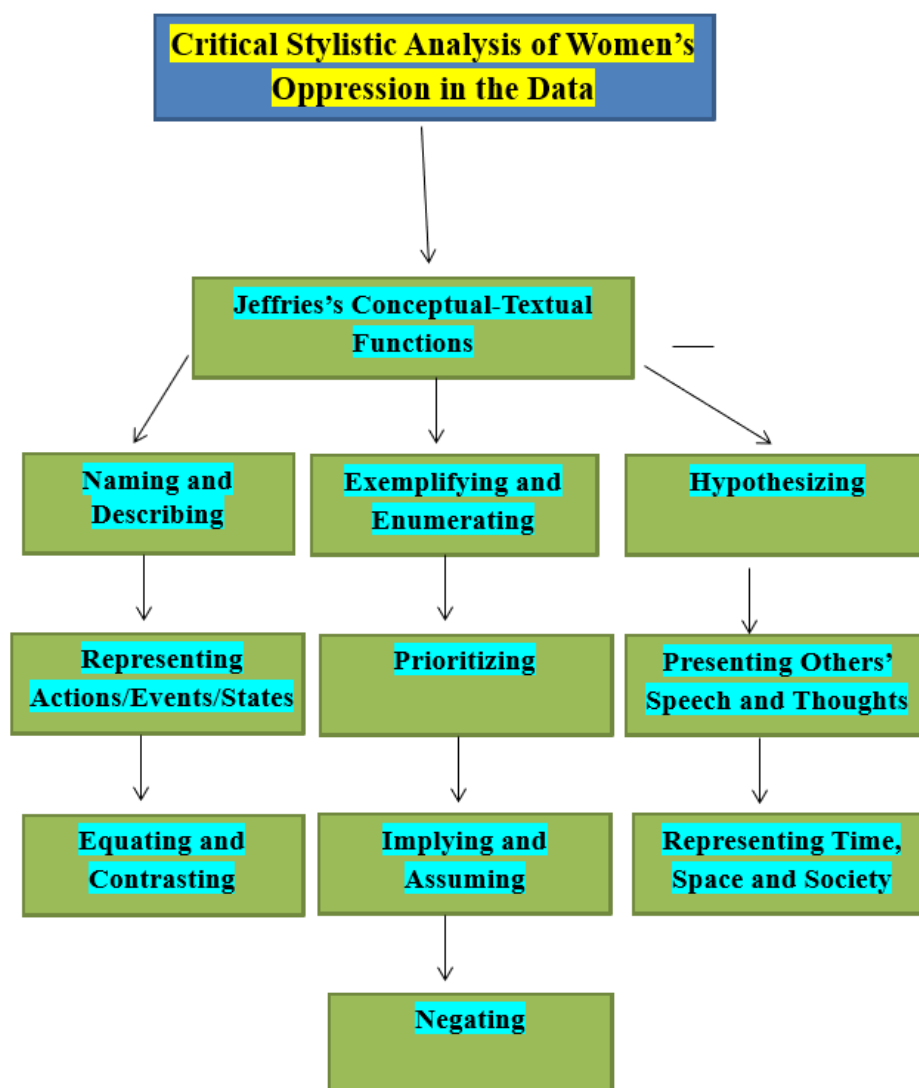


Fig.1: Proposed Model of Analysis

V. DATA ANALYSIS

As mentioned earlier, thirty extracts are taken from the nominated data, eighteen from *The Henna Artist* and twelve from *The Secret Keeper of Jaipur*. The data analysis takes two directions, qualitative and quantitative analysis. Thirty excerpts are qualitatively analyzed, yet, for the sake of space and limitation of this paper, two extracts (3 and 23) are given, as examples of the qualitative practice, from the two novels.

5.1 Extract (3), p. 83

Radha said, "Maa never talked about you. Never spoke your name. I didn't even know you existed until the gossip-eaters told me you disappeared the same year I was born. As soon as I learned to read, I realized it was your letters Maa was burning whenever they arrived. The only letter of yours I read was the one you sent about the train tickets to Jaipur. You didn't mention me in the letter at all. I knew then that you didn't know I existed, either".

Lakshmi and her younger sister Radha meet after a long separation. Following her union with Harry and then fleeing an abusive marriage, Lakshmi made the decision to leave her family. This resulted in her total separation from the family home. The mother made the decision to stop an emotional communication with Lakshmi during that time, refusing to accept her presence and burning the letters she wrote. As a result, Radha did not realize she had an older sister growing up, and she did not learn about her existence from any member of the family—rather, it was via chats with the locals. The family's desire to remove Lakshmi from their memories and present her departure as something shameful that should not be spoken; it is reflected in this forced silence. The background demonstrates how Lakshmi's absence affected Radha's early years and contributed to the breakdown of family ties, highlighting the profound emotional impact of this exclusion.

In this extract, naming and describing is observed through two NPs (*your name* and *gossip-eaters*); the first specifies Lakshmi's name which has not been mentioned while gossip-eaters are used here to illustrate the idea that Lakshmi's name was hidden until gossip-eaters declare it. Negating is repeated when giving references to speech and knowledge in the following statements "*Maa never talked about you ...*" and "*never spoke your name ...*", confirm complete exclusion which reflects the absence of communication and a complete breakdown in the relationship. Further, the statements "*I didn't even know you existed ...*", "*you didn't know ...*" and "*You didn't mention me ...*" reveal mutual ignorance that deepens the sense of separation and also reinforce the idea of marginalization and lack of acknowledgment. Assuming function is found in "*your letters Maa was burning*", proposing that Lakshmi's

communication was unacceptable and not worth keeping by her family. Personal deixis *I/me* in "*I didn't...*", "*I was born...*", "*I learned...*", "*I realized...*", "*I read...*", "*You didn't mention me...*", "*I know...*", and "*I existed...*", indicate Radha's personal experience and suffering, highlighting her feeling of marginalization and lack of recognition. The pronouns *you/your/yours* refer to the addressee, emphasizing her absence from Radha's life and illustrating a relationship built on distance and ignorance in "*Maa never talked about you ...*", "*Never spoke your name*", "*you existed...*", "*your letters ...*", "*The only letter of your...*", "*You didn't mention me...*", and "*you didn't know ...*". For transitivity, material processes are shown in a verb *burning* where the mother is the agent of the action of burning. The verbs *realize* and *know* represent mental processes where they demonstrate awareness and knowledge about Radha and her disappearance which influences her psychologically and emotionally. Additionally, the verbs *talk* and *spoke* show verbalization processes, expressing her ideas and feelings. Moreover, the negation *never* is used to enhance the oppression of Lakshmi's identity and hides her existence within her family. For priority, the NP "*the only letters of yours*" is fronted to emphasize the message she wanted to pay attention to. The fronting strategy is employed to disclose that the mother's speech is more essential and conspicuous than the rest of the message in order to accomplish a certain ideological impact. These linguistic choices expose the ongoing powerlessness type of women's oppression, which is founded not only on actions but also on intentional silence.

5.2 Extract (23), p. 97

"But he might come to Niki and tell him that he was adopted. That his son is Niki's father. What do we do then?"

Being afraid that Samir Singh would take Nikhil (Niki), the narrator, Lakshmi, tries to reassure Kanta that she and her husband, Manu, are the lawful adoptive parents of Niki. Kanta's concern is not entirely reduced by this assurance. She worries that Samir would meddle in another way by disclosing Niki's true origin rather than by forcibly removing the youngster. If Samir reveals to Niki that he has adopted him and that Ravi, Samir's son, is actually his real father, this might have a profound impact on the youngster and upset the stability of the family.

Naming and describing appears through the labels *Niki*, *his son*, and *Niki's father*. The use of *Niki* identifies the child and centers on the discussion in this dialogue; the expression *his son* indicates Ravi (Samir's son), while the name *Niki's father* refers to the child's real father. These characters' identities are made clear by the narrative's

context, even though their names are not stated explicitly in the extract. The personal deictic pronouns *he*, *him*, *his*, and *we* are employed to refer to different persons. The pronoun *he* alludes to Samir, a man who might get involved in Niki's issue, although this man is Samir; his name is implied but not found in the excerpt. Regarding *him*, it indicates Niki, whilst *his* denotes the paternal connection between Samir and his son Ravi. In addition, the pronoun *we* in the question "*What do we do then?*" shows how Kanta is concerned for Niki's future and how she and her husband Manu share a sense of responsibility. By referring to significant individuals in the child's life without specifically naming them, the use of these pronouns helps to emphasize the worry and uncertainty that Kanta is going through. The use of *we* also conveys Kanta's sense of needing help and support to deal with this challenging situation. This worry is connected with the societal pressures that women encounter in a sever society. The modal verb *might* in "*But he might come to Niki and tell him that he was adopted*" serves as a hypothesizing tool; it is used to convey the possibility of something would probably happen (Samir's approaching Niki and telling him the truth) in the future instead of expressing a definite event. This presumption also captures Kanta's tense and unstable state, as she worries that disclosing the truth could cause social or familial troubles. As a result, Kanta's anxiety about the potential disclosure of the truth seems to be evidence of the social pressures women encounter in these situations. The use of implying and assuming is demonstrated in this extract by Kanta's supposition about Samir's future action: "*But he might come to Niki and tell him that he was adopted.*" Although it hasn't happened yet, Kanta considers it a possibility because she is afraid of the social repercussions of adopting an illegitimate child. This presumption serves as an example of how society puts pressure on women and forces them to cope with a social stigma that could negatively impact both them and their children's life. Priority is also observed in *That his son is Niki's father*; the phrase '*that his son*' is fronted to lay emphasis on the unpleasant state of this child. The statement "*What do we do then?*" is considered as a tool of representing other's speech, thought, and society that directly displaying people's inner

thoughts in a conversation to convey their voice or thoughts. Kanta's internal worry and her approach to handling the situation are expressed in this statement. Transitivity appears thru verbs that represent different actions and states such as *come*, *tell*, *was*, *is*, and *do*. The verb *come* is represented as a material process as it indicates a movement or action that can happen in reality—specifically, the person's approaching Niki. The verb *tell* also appears as a verbal process because it refers to the act of speaking or conveying information. The verb emerges as a relational process since it makes the characters' parental relationship clearer. In a similar vein, the verb *was* in phrase "*was adopted*" is a relational process which expresses the child's condition and identity as an adopted child. Concerning the verb *do* in the question "*What do we do then?*", it is a material process referring to a potential action or behavior that can be performed in the future. The use of these verbs contributes to showing the tension and anxiety that Kanta is experiencing, as she imagines a series of possible actions, such as someone approaching and revealing the truth. Indirectly, this extract assumes that this dread is intimately linked to the social shame associated with children who are born outside marriage; a situation frequently has more social repercussions for women. At long last, through linguistic choices employed, this extract conveys a feeling of worry and fear of a family's secret being revealed, which could have negative social repercussions. In these situations, women are frequently subjected to social criticism and limitations, which is a reflection of the patriarchal society's oppression of women. Placed differently, this excerpt discloses the powerlessness aspect of women's oppression.

VI. RESULTS ANALYSIS

A quantitative analysis seems to be important to account for the frequency and percentage of each conceptual-textual function, focusing on the purpose of the number of occurrences of each function. The following table summarizes the frequency and percentage of each function, followed by a figure illustrating the percentages of each function.

Table 1 : Jeffries' Toolkit used in the Novels

NO	Toolkit	Frequency	Percentage
1	Naming & Describing	74	16.01%
2	Representing Actions, Events & States	120	25.97%
3	Equating & Contrasting	10	2.16%
4	Exemplifying & Enumerating	1	0.02%
5	Prioritizing	6	0.12%

6	Implying & Assuming	35	7.57%
7	Negating	45	9.74%
8	Hypothesizing	9	1.94%
9	Presenting Others' Speech& Thoughts	3	0.06%
10	Representing Time, Space & Society	159	34.41%
	Total	462	100%

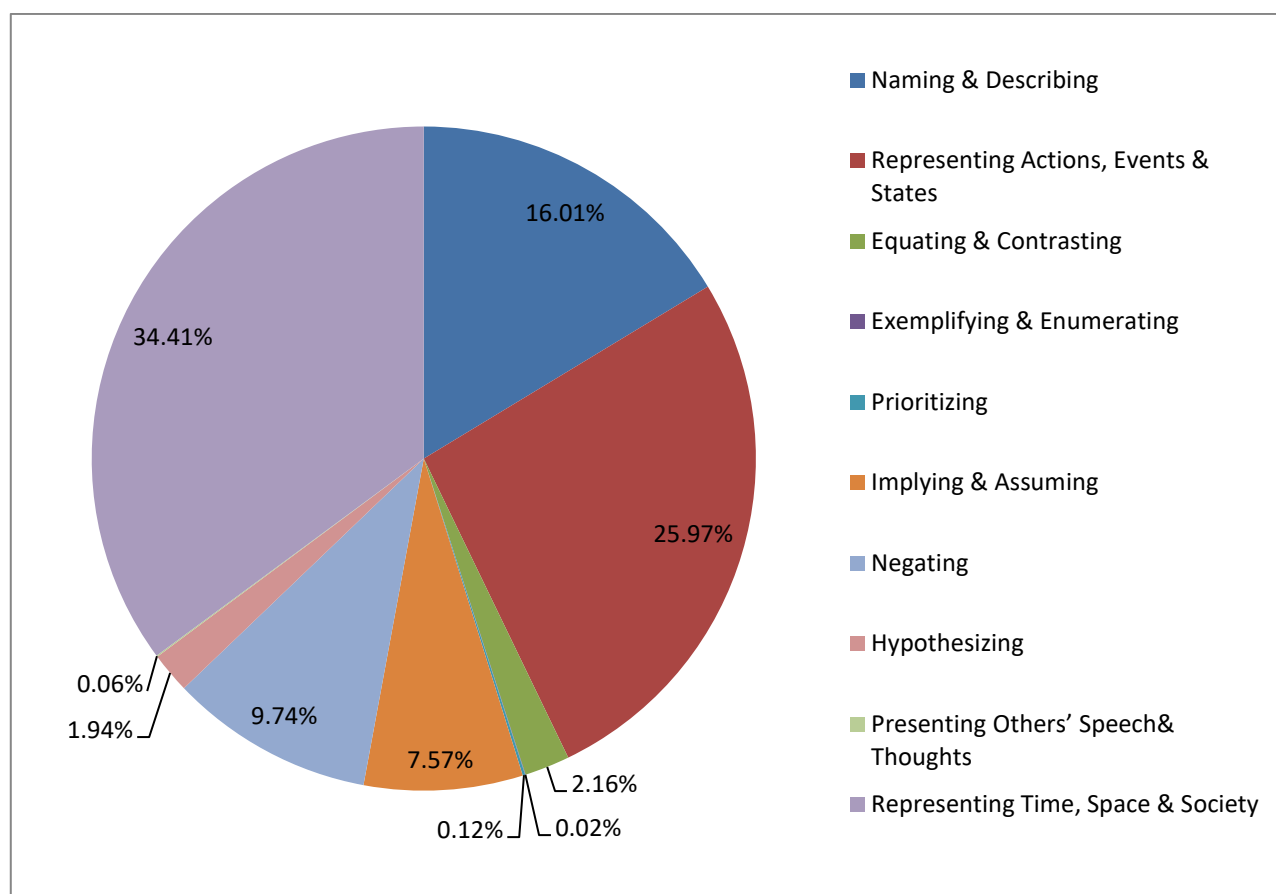


Fig.2: Distribution of Conceptual-textual Functions

VII. FINDINGS

The critical stylistic investigation of the two novels has led to the findings that the two novels deal with feminist ideologies that disclose how women are starting new conservative standards that do battle with patriarchy, gender inequality, and discrimination. The two novels depict gender distinction in several extracts. For instance, the heroine, a henna artist, was underpaid and overworked. Consequently, the writer is efficacious in producing a persuasive idea that seeks for a change to achieve gender equality. Among the most commonly occurring linguistic components in the data are representing actions, events&

states, naming and describing, negation, as well as, implying and assuming. Utilizing naming and describing, women are negatively portrayed as feeble, controlled, or socially constrained. Transitivity through verbal is employed to reflect the writer's ideology; the most frequent verbal process is the material which helps the novel attain its goals of representing women in society. Personal deictic expressions are employed to directly address women and to transfer power and authority to male-dominated society. The paper infers that language is decisive in revealing unequal social power relations and depicting women's oppression as a negative aspect in society.

REFERENCES

- [1] Barker, R. L. (2003). *The social work dictionary* (5th ed.). NASW Press.
- [2] Cruca, S. M. (2005). Changing Ideals of Womanhood During the Nineteenth Century Woman Movement. *ATO*, 19(3), 187-204.
- [3] Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Longman.
- [4] Jeffries, L. (2010). *Critical stylistics: The power of English*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- [5] Jeffries, L. (2014). Interpretation. In P. Stockwell & S. Whiteley (Eds.), *The handbook of stylistics*. Cambridge University Press.
- [6] Jeffries, L. (2015a). Critical stylistics. In V. Sotirova (Ed.), *A companion to stylistics*. Bloomsbury.
- [7] Jeffries, L. (2015b). Language and ideology. In L. Cummings & N. Braber (Eds.), *Introducing language and linguistics*. Cambridge University Press.
- [8] Jeffries, L. (2022). *The language of contemporary poetry: A framework for poetic analysis*. Palgrave. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-09749-2>.
- [9] Jeffries, L., & Walker, B. (2012). Keywords in the press: A critical corpus-assisted analysis of ideology in the Blair years (1998–2007). *English Text Construction*, 5(2).
- [10] Lazar, M. M. (2014). Feminist critical discourse analysis: Relevance for current gender and language studies. In S. Ehrlich, M. Meyerhoff and J. Holmes (eds.), *The handbook of language, gender and sexuality*, (2nd ed.), 180–200. Wiley Blackwell.
- [11] Mills, S. (1995). *Feminist stylistics* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- [12] Mills, S. (1998). *Feminist stylistics*. (2nd ed.) Cambridge University Press.
- [13] Nabila, A. (2020). *The Oppression Towards Women as Reflected in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's The Yellow Wallpaper*. Unpublished MA Thesis, Diponegoro University.
- [14] Nørgaard, N., Busse, B., & Montoro, R. (2010). *Key terms in stylistics*. Continuum.
- [15] Payne, S. (1998). Mysticism, nature of. In E. Craig and E. Craig (Eds.) *The Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (pp. 606-607). Routledge.
- [16] Ras, I. A. (2020). Child victims of human trafficking and modern slavery in British newspapers. In H. Ringrow & S. Pihlaja (Eds.), *Contemporary media stylistics*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- [17] Robbins, S. P. (2011). Oppression theory and social work treatment. In F. Turner (Ed.), *Social work treatment: Interlocking theoretical approaches* (5th ed., pp. 343–353). Oxford University Press.
- [18] Saeed, J. I. (2016). *Semantics* (4th ed.). Blackwell Publishers.
- [19] Samuels, G., & Ross-Sheriff, F. (2008). Identity, oppression, and power: Feminisms and intersectionality theory. *Affilia*, 23(1), 5–9.
- [20] Tabbert, U. (2016). *Language and crime: Constructing offenders and victims in newspaper reports*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- [21] van Dijk, Teun A. 1988. *News Analysis: Case Studies of International and National News in the Press*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- [22] van Soest, D. (2008). Oppression. In T. Mizrahi & L. E. Davis (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of social work* (20th ed., Vol. 3, pp. 322–324). Oxford University Press.
- [23] Walby, S. (1990). *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Basil Blackwell.
- [24] Wodak, R. (Ed.). (1997). *Gender and discourse*. Sage Publications.
- [25] Young, I. M. (1990). *Justice and the politics of difference*. Princeton University Press.